



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Ysgol Gymraeg Dewi Sant

**Ham Lane East
Llantwit Major
CF61 1TQ**

Date of inspection: January 2024

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ysgol Gymraeg Dewi Sant

Name of provider	Ysgol Gymraeg Dewi Sant
Local authority	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	223
Pupils of statutory school age	177
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	29
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.7%)</i>	8%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 13.2%)</i>	15%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	15%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	April 2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	January 2016
Start date of inspection	29/01/2024

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:
mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

Ysgol Gymraeg Dewi Sant is a successful learning community that celebrates Welshness, courtesy and respect well and provides valuable experiences for pupils. The headteacher, with the effective support of the deputy headteacher, provides clear leadership that contributes to a well-rounded education for pupils. Staff are committed to providing a high quality of care and well-being for pupils across the school in a homely and supportive learning environment. This has a strong influence on pupils' attitudes towards each other and adults. Pupils' pride in their local area and Wales is an obvious strength.

Most pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skills that are appropriate for their age and stage of development successfully. They make sound progress in their communication skills and, by the end of their time at the school, they speak both Welsh and English confidently. Most of the oldest pupils read books intelligently in both languages and with increasing fluency. Provision to support the learning skills of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is good. As a result, most make consistent progress over time against their targets and previous achievements.

Where teaching is most effective, pupils make strong progress. In these examples, they apply their skills in activities that provide a challenge to support them to make sound progress in independent learning activities. Where teaching is not as good, there are very few purposeful opportunities for pupils to undertake their learning independently which, in turn, slows their progress.

Self-evaluation arrangements and planning for improvement are thorough. Members of the governing body support the headteacher and staff effectively. They have a sound awareness of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement and provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge.

Maintaining a proactive relationship with all families is a priority for the headteacher and staff. As a result, the lively and effective culture of co-operation contributes significantly to the school's welcoming and inclusive ethos.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure an appropriate challenge to support pupils to make progress in their skills in independent learning activities
- R2 Disseminate the strongest teaching practices across the school

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Learning

On entry to the school, most pupils' skills correspond to what is expected for their age and stage of development, except in Welsh. Most make swift progress from their starting points, particularly in their understanding of the Welsh language. Pupils from different groups, including pupils with ALN, develop increasing confidence and persevere with their activities successfully.

As pupils mature, most make sound progress in developing their communication skills. By the time they reach the end of their time at the school, they communicate confidently and maturely in both languages.

Most pupils' reading skills develop effectively as they move through the school. In the reception class, many pupils begin to recognise letters and associate them with their sounds with increasing accuracy. By Year 2, many read clearly and with appropriate expression. They use phonics strategies effectively to identify simple and familiar words correctly. Most of the oldest pupils read Welsh and English books intelligently and with increasing confidence. They show innate curiosity when reading texts and many pupils at the top of the school read extended texts confidently. A few foster higher-order reading skills skilfully when referring to elements of the text to support their opinion about the characters and events maturely.

Many pupils' early writing skills develop effectively. Many of the youngest pupils develop fine motor skills soundly by making marks and beginning to write letters and simple words. By Year 2, many write interesting sentences for different purposes with increasing independence, for example when writing a story about Cadi the cat going for a walk around the village. Many of the oldest pupils continue to develop their writing skills successfully and, by the top of the school, have sound spelling, punctuation and grammatical skills. Many show a good awareness of the features of a range of writing genres. For example, they write a biography of the contemporary singer, Eädyth Crawford, and a script about events surrounding the Tryweryn protests skilfully.

Most pupils develop their mathematics skills appropriately across the school. The youngest pupils develop their awareness of number well as they count and match numbers to objects. They apply their understanding in various mathematical contexts, such as handling data and money, and shape and measuring length and weight effectively. As pupils move through the school, they build on this early understanding effectively. By the time they reach the top of the school, most have a sound understanding of the four rules, which enables them to use them effectively to solve different problems. A majority of pupils apply their skills purposefully across the curriculum in line with their stage of development. For example, the youngest pupils sort scientific objects on a pie chart correctly and the oldest pupils succeed in collecting data to create a graph to show and identify patterns in the population rates of the local town skilfully.

Most pupils' digital skills develop successfully. The youngest pupils develop their skills well when using an electronic tablet, which promotes their oracy skills and

development of number. By Year 2, they develop their skills purposefully by using an art package to create a detailed picture of a wolf from the story of the Three Little Pigs. As they move through the school, most pupils' skills build consistently on their previous learning. For example, many use a coding app to create a game for the youngest pupils. By Year 6, many pupils use their digital skills extremely confidently to support independent research activities and to write, edit, re-draft and present their findings. The oldest pupils create attractive websites to celebrate the term's theme work. Many pupils use a presentation program to produce a variety of work and film responses to the work of their peers purposefully. Pupils are aware of how to stay safe online and are able to discuss the rules intelligently.

Most pupils develop their physical skills well across the school. As a result of a variety of purposeful experiences, they show a positive attitude towards physical activity. They take part in a variety of learning sessions and learning and extra-curricular activities that promote their health and well-being effectively. For example, pupils at the top of the school co-ordinate fitness sessions for other pupils enthusiastically during the '*Gwener Gwyich*' afternoon. The youngest pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to physical activities in the outdoor area, including cycling. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 benefit from stimulating outdoor experiences during '*Amser Antur*' adventure sessions.

Many pupils across the school demonstrate creativity effectively when composing background music for films based on the legends of Branwen and Gelert, for example. They develop their art skills successfully in a relevant range of activities, which include emulating the work of famous Welsh artists.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils feel proud of their school and their community. They interact well with their peers and the adults who care for them and speak maturely and politely with visitors. Across the school, many pupils have the confidence to discuss their emotional well-being and feelings in specific learning and support sessions. Nearly all are aware and confident that staff are available to discuss or share advice and support purposefully.

Most pupils behave well across the school. For example, before going to class, they discuss any worries from the playground at the end of break times which supports them to be ready to learn. Most behave well in learning sessions, which includes respecting the contributions of their peers. They have a sound understanding of the school's values, rules and reward methods. They are aware that values are an important element of school life, for example fostering patience and showing tolerance towards others.

Nearly all pupils take part enthusiastically in physical activities during their learning sessions and extra-curricular activities. They enjoy activities such as 'A Mile a Day' and the '*Gwener Gwyich*' initiative, which contribute successfully to their physical and mental well-being. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of making healthy choices in terms of selecting food carefully and drinking suitable drinks.

Pupils represent their peers enthusiastically on different councils and make a valuable contribution to the school's work. They meet regularly and are very proud of their recent work and contributions. For example, the 'Dragons' improve pupils' approaches to promote speaking Welsh by praising them and taking part in class competitions. As a result, this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes towards speaking Welsh regularly across the school.

Most pupils apply themselves to their work enthusiastically and persevere to complete activities in the classrooms regularly. Many discuss their work and previous learning confidently. They are proud when responding to oral feedback from teachers and assistants to improve and make progress in their learning.

As pupils mature, most develop an increasing awareness of the importance of receiving and responding to feedback from their peers and teachers. They respect each other's views and contributions during learning sessions and understand the importance of tolerance, which promotes the school's kind ethos successfully.

Most pupils develop as ethical and informed citizens. For example, the youngest pupils show an awareness of the attributes of being a good friend and how to help others. They have an appropriate awareness of children's rights and undertake activities that deal successfully with anti-bullying. Through this, nearly all pupils are proud to be members of the inclusive and supportive community, which contributes robustly to their well-rounded learning experience at the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff provide a rich curriculum and experiences that stimulate pupils successfully. Provision incorporates the school's vision purposefully and encompasses all areas of learning and experience of Curriculum for Wales appropriately. The ethos of Welshness is a prominent feature of the curriculum, which is woven through all aspects of the school's life and work.

The curriculum is enriched effectively by organising educational visits for pupils to interesting educational places and by using the expertise of visitors. For example, teachers invite a local historian to support pupils' learning about life in Llantwit Major during the Tudor period. On the whole, there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to contribute to their own learning, which includes suggesting ideas at the beginning of new themes. As a result, they show enthusiasm and interest in all aspects of their work.

Teachers work together effectively to plan a curriculum that ensures progression and development in pupils' skills. On the whole, teachers create a purposeful learning environment where pupils nurture their imagination, develop their problem-solving skills and investigate and discover for themselves. In a majority of classes, learning experiences enable pupils to practise and apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills purposefully across the curriculum. For example, teachers support the oldest pupils effectively as they produce the '*Llais y Ddraig*' newspaper, which is published and sold on a termly basis. However, in a minority of classes, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills in activities that challenge them effectively enough. Provision also does not allow a minority of

pupils to achieve to the best of their ability in independent learning activities, particularly in the outdoor learning environment.

The stimulating learning environment provides a homely environment for pupils to learn. There is an extremely positive relationship between staff and pupils. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils in terms of behaviour, which nurtures their respect and courtesy successfully. Reward methods are used effectively to celebrate pupils' effort and positive attitudes. Nearly all staff use polished language effectively when communicating with pupils. Pupils are encouraged to speak Welsh with increasing accuracy in a supportive learning environment.

Where teaching is most effective, most pupils make strong progress. In these examples, they work independently when applying their skills effectively across the areas of learning. Teachers provide useful oral feedback to challenge and guide pupils to the next steps in their learning. Effective use is also made of methods that encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning with increasing independence.

Purposeful opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss their work, for example as they respond to expectations for their tasks. Many teachers and assistants support pupils' needs diligently and begin to develop their thinking skills effectively through probing questioning methods. Where teaching is not as good, teachers do not provide enough purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in challenging learning activities that promote their independence well enough.

Many teachers give pupils purposeful opportunities to reflect on their individual progress, in addition to assessing the achievements of their peers. Opportunities are provided for pupils to recall and reflect on previous learning and offer effective opportunities for them to check their work regularly. This is a notable element of the teaching and learning in these classes. End of year reports for parents are comprehensive and report effectively on progress, include pupils' comments, detail the year's experiences and present sensible aspects for the next steps in their learning.

Care, support and guidance

The school is an inclusive and welcoming community. Staff promote the importance of good behaviour, courtesy and respect effectively. Positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute directly to their happiness and well-being. Staff commit to ensuring that values and pupils' emotional well-being are key to their work.

Staff support the emotional, health and social needs of pupils and their families through a range of purposeful activities. For example, there are opportunities for pupils to discuss and record any concerns on a daily basis and staff respond to them in a timely manner.

The school has robust arrangements that have a positive effect on pupils with ALN. The Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) fulfils her role rigorously, which enables her to identify pupils' educational and well-being needs at an early stage. As a result of detailed planning of provision, pupils receive support that meets their needs beneficially. The ALNCo works effectively with a variety of external agencies

and receives and acts on expert guidance and advice to support pupils who need additional support. Key staff communicate effectively with parents about ALN arrangements and include pupils, who are a central part of the process. Staff have suitable arrangements for identifying the progress of ALN pupils in relation to their stages of development and their individual needs. As a result, most pupils who need additional support with their learning or aspects of well-being make consistent progress.

The school promotes and develops pupils' understanding of their identity, heritage and culture well. Pupils take advantage of opportunities to celebrate their Welshness and feel that they belong to the school and the local community. Staff organise regular visits and provide beneficial opportunities to welcome visitors to the school to enrich their learning experiences. For example, staff organise for pupils to visit a nearby beach to learn about geographical features and about the history and traditions of local buildings.

Staff promote the importance of eating healthily and encourage physical fitness by providing a range of physical activities, which include sport clubs. Staff organise and provide a range of outdoor activities well. For example, the 'Amser Antur' sessions encourage pupils to work together in interesting activities that contribute well to their well-being and enjoyment of learning. Provision also promotes pupils' understanding successfully of how to make healthy lifestyle choices and of the importance of keeping fit.

Pupils' spiritual and moral attitudes are promoted effectively through periods of reflection and collective worship assemblies. Regular assemblies are held, in which opportunities are provided for pupils to play an active part. Discussing values and children's rights is an integral part of the assemblies. They ensure beneficial opportunities for pupils to reflect on current affairs and different religions and cultures well.

Staff develop beneficial opportunities for pupils to make decisions about the school through their membership of the school councils. Suitable opportunities are provided for them to express an opinion about how to improve different aspects of the school, and various opportunities for many to take part in performances and events. For example, pupils take advantage of opportunities regularly, such as taking part in local sports competitions and competing and performing in Eisteddfodau, which develops their confidence and their creative and physical skills successfully.

The school's culture of safeguarding is sound and staff understand their roles and responsibilities in contributing to pupils' safety and well-being. There is effective provision to enable pupils to keep themselves safe when learning online. The school has robust arrangements to promote punctuality and regular attendance among pupils, including daily monitoring, regular communication with parents and follow-up work supported by the local authority. As a result, attendance rates have increased this year.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, with the valuable support of the deputy headteacher, provides the school with robust leadership, which ensures an effective strategic direction and an

open culture that promotes continuous improvement. They have a clear vision based on ensuring that the well-being of pupils, their families and staff is a core part of school life. They share this vision successfully with staff, pupils, parents and governors. As a result, they have high expectations of themselves and of pupils' progress and achievement. The expectations to be 'ready, respectful and safe' are core to all of the school's activity.

Leadership systems have been established across the school effectively. Staff work together effectively, fulfil their roles rigorously and support the headteacher beneficially. Leaders plan purposefully to meet local and national priorities, including reducing the impact of poverty on pupils by adopting new school uniform arrangements which save costs for parents.

Staff address recent educational developments enthusiastically. For example, they have embedded the principles and expectations of Curriculum for Wales appropriately, experiment with up-to-date pedagogical approaches and implement key elements of the Additional Learning Needs Act effectively. All of the school's staff place a clear emphasis on promoting the Welsh language and Welshness and this, in turn, develops pupils' pride in their language and heritage.

Priorities for improvement are based on a good range of first-hand evidence and staff's understanding of them is sound. The effective arrangements review progress, identify areas for improvement and outline reasonable steps for implementing them to develop the school further. These include a careful analysis of pupils' progress and outcomes, scrutinising their work and observing learning sessions. Staff play an inclusive part in the process of monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement. As a result, they know their school well and address most of the improvements successfully.

Regular sessions are held for staff to organise and implement activities to achieve the agreed priorities. Teachers are responsible for leading the development of the curriculum's areas of learning and experience. Assistants are key members of the school team and contribute purposefully to improving pupils' learning achievements, well-being and social skills.

Members of the governing body have a sound knowledge of the performance and effect of the school's procedures on pupils' standards and well-being. They share responsibilities conscientiously and have begun to conduct purposeful visits and activities to evaluate the effect of provision on pupils' standards and progress. They challenge the school on suitable issues sensibly and contribute appropriately to producing clear procedures in order to improve. Occasionally, they work with staff and pupils to ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote regular healthy eating and drinking.

The headteacher and governors use the budget effectively to enrich the curriculum and raise pupils' standards. They link expenditure appropriately with improvement priorities and monitor funding carefully to ensure its best use. Leaders use the pupil development grant sensibly, which has a positive effect on the progress and well-being of specific groups of pupils.

A strong feature of the leadership is the purposeful opportunities that are provided for all staff to develop professionally. This includes opportunities for them to receive purposeful training on the developments of Curriculum for Wales and sessions to deepen their understanding of effective pedagogical approaches, for example. Performance management arrangements promote staff's professional learning purposefully and are beginning to have a positive effect on continuing to improve pupils' standards. Arrangements include purposeful opportunities for all staff to evaluate the previous academic year before considering the development steps for the future. The headteacher supports teachers to investigate aspects of their teaching practices to identify a positive effect on pupils' achievement. The school has an active relationship with the secondary school and the rest of the schools in the cluster, which includes producing strategic plans for introducing the principles of Curriculum for Wales and developing relevant assessment methods.

The relationship between the school and parents is sound. The headteacher and staff communicate effectively with them to ensure that they are aware of the school's day-to-day events. Staff forge a proactive relationship with all families, which contributes significantly to the welcoming and inclusive ethos.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body/members of the management committee through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales>)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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